GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3800
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Shortage of Critical Minerals
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Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that potential of minerals is untapped fully despite having vast mineral resources in the country, if so, the details thereof and, the reasons therefor alongwith the steps taken in this regard so far;
(b) whether the country is likely to face acute shortage of critical minerals necessary for developing clean-energy applications, infrastructure for its solar mission and for manufacturing high-technology products in future, if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether the country is also likely to be largely dependent on China in the coming years to source such materials for its manufacturing sector and is at present 100% import dependent for critical minerals, if so, the details thereof; and
(d) the measures taken by the Government to reduce such dependence?

Answer

(a) to (d): India is endowed with a potential for vast mineral resources. Exploration for minerals is a continuous process and the quantity of resources is updated on a regular basis. Geological Survey of India (GSI), an attached office of the Ministry of Mines, is taking up measures to increase the mineral exploration activity at deeper levels to discover different mineral deposits through its Annual Field Season Programmes. Atomic Minerals Directorate, Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited, State Directorates of Geology & Mining, State/Central Undertakings and Private Enterprises are also engaged in detailed exploration to identify mineral deposits.

India is dependent on imports for many critical elements like rare earths elements, selenium, germanium, rhenium etc. required for clean-energy applications, solar cells and high technology products.
In pursuance of the MMDR Amendment Act 2015, the Government has established the National Mineral Exploration Trust with the prime objective of promoting regional and detailed mineral exploration in the country. Further, the Government has formulated the National Mineral Exploration Policy, 2016 for accelerating mineral exploration in the country through diverse measures like open dissemination of baseline geosciences data, launching of National Aerogeophysical Mapping Programme, attractive revenue sharing model for inviting private investment in mineral exploration etc. All these are aimed towards exploration and discovery of mineral deposits including critical minerals. Out of 100 blocks identified by GSI for undertaking regional exploration by private and public agencies, 22 blocks are for strategic and critical minerals.
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